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EXAMINER

CORBETT, MITCHELL

| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
|----------|--------------|
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2614

DATE MAILED: 12/23/2003

8

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/381,401

Applicant(s)

AKAMATSU ET AL.

Examiner

Mitchell J Corbett

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11/15/99.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6. 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to because it is not clear if the proposed drawings submitted 11/15/99 for figure 1a, 1b, 6a, 6b, 14a, and 14b are replacement drawings to figures 1, 6, and 14 or additional drawings. Further, the specification (including the brief description) must be amended to correspond to the drawings.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

The changes for figures 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, and 21 are approved.

Specification

2. Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure. The suggested correction is marked in boldface type in the following:

The abstract should be in narrative form and **generally limited to a single paragraph** on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

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The specification ^{submitted}~~entered~~ 11/15/99 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-11, 14-17, 21, 23-27, 31, and 36-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Iijima et al. (Iijima) (US 5,760,698).

Considering claim 1, Iijima describes an AV apparatus (VTR1 in fig. 13) capable of transmitting data to and from any other AV apparatus (one of VTR2 and VTR3 in fig. 13) via a bus (column 5, lines 8-13) comprising a means for transmitting (see microcomputer 5, fig. 14) a request for storage of apparatus use data to any AV apparatus with which transmission or reception of data via said bus is intended (see virtual digital plug, column 10, lines 32-42). In column 10, lines 32-42, Iijima describes a "virtual digital plug" for both input and output apparatuses stored in each AV apparatus which describes use information for AV apparatuses (i.e. the bandwidth, channel, as well as the ability to output). In this description, the first AV apparatus sends a request to other AV apparatuses to store use information into the virtual plug of another apparatus.

As for claim 2, Iijima anticipates an AV apparatus further comprising means for setting apparatus use information to effect transmission or reception of audio/visual information (column 5, lines 12-17) in a desired period of time (see isochronous communication packet, fig. 15).

As for claim 3/2, Iijima anticipates said AV apparatus further comprising a means for storing said apparatus use information (see plug 1, column 10, lines 43-48). An image list containing the status of each apparatus is stored in response to plug configuration changes.

As for claim 4, Iijima further anticipates a means for receiving information indicating if said apparatus use information transmitted from another apparatus could be stored, in response to a request for storage (column 10, lines 32-42 and fig. 18).

As for claim 5, Iijima anticipates a means for receiving apparatus use information on another AV apparatus (transmitted by said apparatus) in response to said request for storage (see virtual digital plug, column 10, lines 32-42).

As for claim 6, Iijima anticipates a means for transmitting apparatus use information to another AV apparatus when said other AV apparatus is able to store said apparatus use data (see microcomputer 5, fig. 14, and column 10, lines 32-48).

As for claim 7, Iijima anticipates an AV apparatus provided with means for transmitting the ability to store apparatus use information to a display means for display of said information (column 9, lines 31-36 and 48-54). If unable to store use information (i.e. the number of input/output plugs has been exceeded), a message indicative of the ability to store said information is issued to a display means.

As for claim 8, Iijima anticipates the AV apparatus further comprising a means for transmitting use information with a storage request to another AV apparatus via said bus. In figure 18 Iijima discloses the request to store use information (line A1) as coinciding with the transfer of use information (see "Tuner1 -> PLUG?", FIG. 18 A1 and column 10, lines 32-48).

As for claim 9-11, Iijima anticipates an AV apparatus further comprising a means for transmitting to said other AV apparatus a request for transmission of conflicting use information when said other apparatus is unable to store said use information; a means for receiving said conflicting use data; and a means for transmitting said conflicting use data to a display means to display said conflicting use information (column 9, lines 6-15, and column 11, lines 38-54).

As for claim 14, Iijima anticipates an AV apparatus (VTR1 in fig. 18) capable of transmitting or receiving information via a bus from any other AV apparatus (TV1 in fig.

18) comprising a means to determine if indicated use information transmitted from said other AV apparatus is possible (column 10 lines 32-42).

As for claim 15, Iijima anticipates an AV apparatus further comprising a means for storing apparatus use information when said is possible (see virtual digital plug, column 10, lines 43-48).

As for claim 16/15, Iijima anticipates an AV apparatus further comprising a means for transmitting to said other AV apparatus data indicating that said use is impossible (column 9, lines 44-59).

As for claim 17, Iijima anticipates an AV apparatus comprising a means for transmitting the impossibility of said use along with the reason for said impossibility (see "recording" response in figure 9, and column 9, lines 6-15, 44-59).

As for claim 21, Iijima anticipates a method characterized in that out of at least two AV apparatuses (VTR1 and TV1 in fig. 13) connected together, a first AV apparatus (VTR1) requests a second AV apparatus (TV1) to store use information indicative of the intention to use said second AV apparatus (intending to transmit or receive audiovisual data), and said second AV apparatus determines if use indicated by said apparatus use information is possible (column 10, lines 32-42).

As for claim 23/21, Iijima anticipates a method whereby if use by a second AV apparatus (as indicated by use information) is possible, said first AV apparatus transmits said use information to said second AV apparatus via a bus (column 10, lines 32-42).

As for claim 24, Iijima anticipates a method of use whereby both said first and said second AV apparatus (VTR1 and TV1 in fig. 18, respectively) store said use information, if use by the second AV apparatus is possible (see column 10, lines 33-42 for storage by TV1, and lines 44-48 for storage by VTR1).

As for claim 25, Iijima anticipates a method whereby if said second apparatus use information indicates an impossibility of use, said second apparatus transmits information indicating said impossibility to said first apparatus via a bus (column 9, lines 44-59).

As for claim 26/21, Iijima anticipates a method whereby if use of said other AV apparatus (as indicated by its use information) is impossible, second AV apparatus transmits the cause for impossibility along with the actual message indicating the impossibility for use to the first AV apparatus via said bus (see "recording" response in figure 9, and column 9, lines 6-15, 44-59).

As for claim 27, Iijima anticipates a method whereby conflicting sets of apparatus use information are transmitted to a display means for display (figure 8, and column 9, lines 6-15).

As for claim 31, Iijima anticipates an AV system consisting of a plurality of bus-connected AV apparatuses (column 5, lines 9-11) characterized in that a first AV apparatus (VTR1 in fig. 18) transmits apparatus use information to a second apparatus (TV1 in fig. 18) from which said first apparatus intends to receive audiovisual information via said bus, and said second AV apparatus stores said use information if indicated use is possible (column 10, lines 32-48).

As for claims 36 and 37, Iijima anticipates a system and method in which an AV apparatus (VTR3 in fig. 9) provided with a means for setting intended use data of another AV apparatus (CAM1 in fig. 9), and means for checking if use indicated by said information is possible and if use is impossible, information indicating said impossibility is displayed on a display means (figure 9 and column 9, lines 6-15 and 44-59).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 12-13, 18-20, and 28-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iijima as applied to claims 1-11, 21, 26, and 27 above, and further in view of Young (US 4,706,121).

Considering claims 12 and 28, Iijima discloses a system and method bus-connected AV apparatuses capable of transmitting and receiving data based on use requests by other AV apparatuses. Although the system of Iijima discloses a means for transmitting and receiving conflicting use data (column 9 lines 6-15 and column 11, lines 38-54), Iijima fails to teach a means for deciding which set of conflicting apparatus use information is to be given priority, as recited in the claims.

Young discloses a VCR scheduling system and method whereby a request for storage of use information is sent to an AV system along with use information (see user selection, Young, col. 4, lines 53-60 and column 5, lines 48-51). Young further discloses a means whereby, upon reception of conflicting use information, the system determines which set of conflicting apparatus use information is to be given priority (column 20, lines 9-17), for the purpose of providing a reliable means for selecting use data in a given apparatus.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of invention to modify the system of Iijima to include a means for deciding which set of conflicting apparatus use information is to be given priority, as taught by Young, for the purpose of providing a reliable means for selecting use data in a given apparatus.

As for claim 13, the combined systems of Iijima and Young disclose a means for reading out stored apparatus use information, and a means for altering said retrieved apparatus use information (Young, col. 20, lines 12-13, and 18-19).

Considering claims 18 and 29, Iijima discloses a system and method whereby an AV apparatus capable of transmitting and receiving data based on use requests by other AV apparatuses. Although the system of Iijima discloses a storage means and a means for reading out said stored use information (column 10, lines 37-42), Iijima fails to teach a means for altering said stored use data, as recited in the claims.

Young discloses a VCR scheduling system whereby stored use information can be altered (column 20, lines 6-19), for the advantage of providing a means to correct any usage conflicts that may arise.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of invention to modify the system of Iijima to include a system whereby stored use information can be altered, as taught by Young, for the advantage of providing a means to correct any usage conflicts that may arise.

Considering claim 19, the combined systems of Iijima and Young further disclose an AV system whereby stored use information is transmitted to a display means, which in turn reads out said use information (see still image list, Iijima, column 11, lines 7-13).

Considering claims 20 and 30, the combined systems of Iijima and Young disclose an AV apparatus wherein the request to store use information sent to said second AV apparatus contains the starting and ending time intended use of another AV apparatus (Young column 14, lines 1-12).

7. Claims 22 and 32-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iijima and further in view of Yamauchi et al. (Yamauchi) (US 6,020,982).

As for claim 22, Iijima discloses a method characterized in that, out of at least two bus-connected AV apparatuses, a first AV apparatus (VTR in fig. 18) requests a second AV apparatus (TV1 in fig. 18) to store apparatus use information indicating the intention to use said second AV apparatus via a bus (column 10, lines 32-42). Iijima further discloses said second apparatus sending use information (column 9, lines 6-15), however, Iijima fails to disclose said first apparatus determining if use by said second apparatus is possible based on both use information transmitted from said second apparatus and requested apparatus use information, as recited in the claim.

Yamauchi discloses a system wherein a first apparatus (editing machine 600, fig. 1) determines if use by a second apparatus (see word processor 812, fig. 1) is possible based on both use information transmitted (i.e. connection status) from said second apparatus and requested apparatus use information (see control and management information of editing machine 600, figure 87A, and column 50, lines 54-67), for the

advantage of providing a centralized way of determining the status of various connected apparatuses.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the system of Iijima and to include a means whereby said second apparatus responding by sending its own use information, and said first apparatus determining if use by said second apparatus is possible based on both use information transmitted from said second apparatus and requested apparatus use information, as taught by Yamauchi, for the advantage of providing a centralized way of determining the status of various connected apparatuses.

As for claim 32, Iijima discloses a system consisting of a plurality of bus-connected AV apparatuses (one of TV1, VTR1, VTR2, VTR3 and CAM1, fig. 18) able to transmit, receive, and store use information of other AV apparatuses (column 5, lines 8-17). Although Iijima discloses a first and second AV apparatus (VTR1 and TV1 in fig. 18, respectively), wherein the second AV apparatus transmits audiovisual signals to the first apparatus (column 10, lines 32-48), Iijima fails to disclose that if the system configuration is altered by the removal of a apparatus, a first apparatus out of said apparatus system reads out stored use information, and at least one second apparatus is checked for the possibility of use as indicated by said apparatus use information, as recited in the claim.

Yamauchi discloses an AV system in which, if the system configuration is altered by the removal of a apparatus, a first apparatus (see CPU part 625, part of editing

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machine 600, column 51, lines 13-20) out of said apparatus system reads out stored use information, and at least one second apparatus (see display 1, column 51, line 17) is checked for the possibility of use as indicated by said apparatus use information (fig. 87A and column 51, lines 13-27), for the advantage of providing an automated means to recover from the removal of a apparatus from the bus.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the system of Iijima to include a system characterized in that if the system configuration is altered by the removal of a apparatus, a first apparatus out of said apparatus system reads out stored use information, and at least one second apparatus is checked for the possibility of use as indicated by said apparatus use information, as taught by Yamauchi, for the advantage of providing an automated means to recover from the removal of a apparatus from the bus.

As for claim 33, the combined systems of Iijima and Yamauchi disclose an AV system in which said apparatus use information is deleted if the indicated use of said information is impossible (Yamauchi, column 50, lines 54-57).

8. Claim 34 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iijima as applied to claim 31 above, and further in view of Kopetz (US 4,866,606).

Considering claim 34, Iijima discloses an AV system consisting of a plurality of bus-connected AV apparatuses. Iijima fails to disclose said plurality of apparatuses performing time adjustment, as recited in the claim.

In a related art, Kopetz discloses a network of apparatuses in which each apparatus contains a local clock, and moreover, performs time adjustment (see "synchronization of the real time clocks", column 1, lines 33-48), for the purpose of preventing scheduling conflicts due to unsynchronized clocks.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the system of Iijima to include a plurality of apparatuses performing time adjustment, as taught by Kopetz, for the purpose of preventing scheduling conflicts due to unsynchronized clocks.

9. Claim 35 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iijima in view of Kopetz as applied to claim 34 above, and further in view of Young (US 4,706,121).

The combined system of Iijima and Kopetz disclose an AV system consisting of a plurality of bus-connected AV apparatuses, in which each AV apparatus performs time adjustment. Although Iijima discloses a system whereby use information contains the ID of said second AV apparatus, Iijima does not disclose said use information containing the starting and ending time of intended use of said second AV apparatus, as recited in the claim.

Young discloses a VCR scheduling system wherein said use information sent to said second AV apparatus contains the starting and ending time intended use of said second AV apparatus (Young column 14, lines 1-12), for the purpose of preventing scheduling conflicts.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the systems of Iijima and Kopetz to include said use information containing the starting and ending time of intended use of said second AV apparatus, as taught by Young, for the purpose of preventing scheduling conflicts.

10. Claim 38 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iijima and further in view of Van Steenbrugge (US 5,502,436).

Considering claim 38, Iijima discloses an AV system consisting of a plurality of bus-connected AV apparatuses in which apparatus use information pertaining to a first AV apparatus (VTR1 in fig. 18) is stored by said first apparatus and at least one second apparatus (TV1 in fig. 18) intending to transmit video information to said first AV apparatus. Iijima does not disclose a system further comprising: when a third AV apparatus intends to transmit AV information to said first AV apparatus, the state of use of said first apparatus and said second apparatus is grasped by inquiring of only said second apparatus, as recited in the claim.

Van Steenbrugge discloses an AV system of serially bus-connected AV apparatuses (one of SAT 10, LV 14, AMP 18, TV 16 and VCR 12 in fig. 3) in which each apparatus has only connection knowledge of its local peers. Van Steenbrugge discloses the system further comprising a third AV apparatus (laser disc video player, LV 14), intending to transmit AV data to said first apparatus (VCR 12), grasps the state of use of said first apparatus and a second apparatus (amplifier, AMP 18) by inquiring of

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only said second apparatus (figures 1 and 2, and column 5, lines 32-67), for the advantage of eliminating the necessity for each AV apparatus to store use knowledge about each apparatus in said bus. In the example given, the LV 14 inquires to make a connection with the VCR 12. If, for example a connection already exists between the AMP 18 and the VCR 12, LV 14 need only inquire AMP 18 for the status of either VCR 12 or AMP 18. In the case of returning status for VCR 12, AMP 18 forwards the request until the destination (VCR 12) is reached, and a response is returned to LV 14 (column 5, lines 32-67).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify the system of Iijima include system further comprising: when a third AV apparatus intends to transmit AV information to said first AV apparatus, the state of use of said first apparatus and said second apparatus is grasped by inquiring of only said second apparatus, as taught by van Steenbrugge, for the advantage of eliminating the necessity for each AV apparatus to store use knowledge about each apparatus in said bus.

Conclusion

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Sugiyama et al. (US 5,815,631) discloses a system of bus-connected AV apparatuses that provides for communication and control between said AV apparatuses.

Sato et al (US 5,802,017) similarly discloses a plurality of bus-connected AV apparatuses which are able to communicate via said bus, to include allowing for AV apparatuses to request recording and transmittal of recorded data from other AV apparatuses.

Ishii et al. (US 5,361,173) discloses a system of connected AV apparatuses, further providing for the management of reservations between said apparatuses.

12. The following are suggested formats for either a Certificate of Mailing or Certificate of Transmission under 37 CFR 1.8(a). The certification may be included with all correspondence concerning this application or proceeding to establish a date of mailing or transmission under 37 CFR 1.8(a). Proper use of this procedure will result in such communication being considered as timely if the established date is within the required period for reply. The Certificate should be signed by the individual actually depositing or transmitting the correspondence or by an individual who, upon information and belief, expects the correspondence to be mailed or transmitted in the normal course of business by another no later than the date indicated.

Certificate of Mailing

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to:

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P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate:

Signature: _____

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(Date)

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate:

Signature: _____

Please refer to 37 CFR 1.6(d) and 1.8(a)(2) for filing limitations concerning facsimile transmissions and mailing, respectively.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mitchell J Corbett whose telephone number is (703) 305-8982. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chris Grant can be reached on (703) 305-4755. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-HELP.

Mitchell Corbett
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2614

MJC


CHRIS GRANT
PRIMARY EXAMINER